

Kalenjin languages

The **Kalenjin languages** are a family of a dozen Southern Nilotic languages spoken in Kenya, eastern Uganda and northern Tanzania. The term Kalenjin comes from an expression meaning 'I say (to you)' or 'I have told you' (present participle tense). *Kalenjin* in this broad linguistic sense should not be confused with *Kalenjin* as a term for the common identity the Nandi-speaking peoples of Kenya assumed halfway through the twentieth century; see *Kalenjin people* and *Kalenjin language*.

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Branches

The Kalenjin languages are generally distinguished into four branches. There is less certainty regarding internal relationships within these.

- Elgon (Sebei)
- Nandi–Markweta (Kalenjin)
- Okiek–Mosiro
- Pökoot

Comparative vocabulary

Sample basic vocabulary of Kalenjin languages from van Otterloo (1979),^[2] and Proto-Southern Nilotic from Rottland (1982).^[3]

Language	eye	ear	nose	tooth	tongue	mouth	blood	bone	tree	water	to eat	name
Proto-Southern Nilotic	*kɔ:ŋ, *kɔŋ	i:t	*ser	*ke:L-at	*ŋɛLyɛp	*kɔ:t		*ka:w	*ke:t	*peR		*ka:Rɪn
Nandi	kɔ:ndə	i:tit	seru:t	ke:ldet	ŋelypta	ky:tit	koroti:k	ka:we:t	ke:tit	be:k	keam	ka:yne:t
Kipsigis	kɔ:ndə	i:tit	seru:t	ke:ldet	ŋelypta	ky:tit	koroti:k	ka:we:t	ke:tit	be:k	keam	ka:yne:t
Terik	kɔ:ndə	i:tit	seru:t	ke:ndet	ŋenyępta	ky:tit	koroti:k	ka:we:t	ke:tit	be:k	keam	ka:yne:t
Keiyo	kɔ:ndə	i:tit	seru:t	ke:ldet	ŋelyępta	ky:tit	koroti:k	ka:we:t	ke:tit	be:k	keam	ka:yne:t
South Tugen	kɔ:ndə	i:tit	seru:(t)	ke:ldę(t)	ŋelyępta	ky:ti	koroti:k	ka:we:	ke:t(it)	be:k	keam	ka:yne:t
North Tugen	kɔ:ŋ	i:t	seř	ke:ląt	ŋelyep	ky:t	koroti	ka:we	ke:t	be:y	keam	ka:yne
Kony-Sabaot	kɔ:ndə	i:tit	serwut	ke:ldet	ŋelypta	ky:tit	koroti:k	ka:we:t	ke:tit	pe:go	keam	ka:yne:t
Cherang'any	kɔ:ndə/ko:ŋ	i:tit	seru:t	ke:lat	ŋelyep	ku:t(it)	koroti:k	ka:we	ke:t	be:y	keam	ka:yne
Talai	kɔ:ŋ	i:t	seř	ke:ląt	ŋalyap	ky:t	koroti	ka:wa	ke:t	pʰe:y	keam	ka:yne
Endo	kɔ:ŋ	i:t	seř	ke:ląt	ŋalyap	ky:t	koroti/kisun	ka:wa	ke:t	buř	keam	kařen
East Pokot	ko:ŋ	y:i:t	səř	ke:ląt	ŋalyap	ky:t	kisun	ka:wa?	ke:t	pue:γ	keam	ka:yne:t

Footnotes

1. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Kalenjin" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kale1246>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
2. van Otterloo, Roger. 1979. *A Kalenjin dialect study*. (Language Data Africa Series, 18.) Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Kalenjin	
Geographic distribution	western Kenya, eastern Uganda, northern Tanzania
Linguistic classification	Nilo-Saharan? ▪ Eastern Sudanic ▪ Nilotc ▪ Southern Nilotic ▪ Kalenjin
Subdivisions	Elgon Nandi–Markweta Okiek–Mosiro Pökoot
ISO 639-3	kln (http://www.1.sil.org/iso639-3/documentation.asp?id=kln)
Glottolog	kale1246 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kale1246) ^[1]

3. Rottland, Franz. 1982. *Die Südnilotischen Sprachen: Beschreibung, Vergleichung und Rekonstruktion* (Kölner Beiträge zur Afrikanistik vol. 7). Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.

References

- Distefano, John Albert. 1985. *The precolonial history of the Kalenjin of Kenya: a methodological comparison of linguistic and oral traditional evidence*. Doctoral dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles.
- Rottland, Franz (1982) *Die Südnilotischen Sprachen: Beschreibung, Vergleichung und Rekonstruktion* (Kölner Beiträge zur Afrikanistik vol. 7). Berlin: Dietrich Reimer. (See esp. map 1 on p. 31, and the 'Sprachbeschreibung' of the Kalenjin languages on pp. 69–143.)
- van Otterloo, Roger. 1979. *A Kalenjin dialect study*. (Language Data Africa Series, 18.) Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

External links

- [Kalenjin–English Dictionary](http://africanlanguages.com/kalenjin/) (<http://africanlanguages.com/kalenjin/>)
- [A Kalenjin website](https://web.archive.org/web/20131222204741/http://www.kalenjin.net/newsite/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20131222204741/http://www.kalenjin.net/newsite/>)
- [Phonology of Endo - a Kalenjin language](http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.129.5150&rep=rep1&type=pdf) (<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.129.5150&rep=rep1&type=pdf>)

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